



Town of Saugus

Mandatory Recycling Case Study

MassDEP Municipal Waste Reduction Toolkit



Town Statistics:

Population: 26,078

Households: 9,975

Median Income: The median income for a household in the town was \$55,301, and the median income for a family was \$65,782.

Overview/Introduction: In fiscal year 2006, the town of Saugus was facing increasing trash tonnages and mounting disposal costs in an already tight budget. In an attempt to control these rising expenses, Saugus began enforcing the state's waste bans by stipulating that it would not longer pick-up visible recyclables with refuse and imposed a 5 trash bag/per pickup limit on residents.

Outreach:

- Prior to the enforcement, the recycling coordinator followed the truck routes and took pictures to document the trash problems and presented these to the town boards, making a case to move forward with this type of program.
- In September, to aid in the enforcement process, the town hired a Solid Waste Enforcement Officer for 19 hours a week.

Enforcement Implementation:

- The role of the Enforcement Officer was to follow behind the trucks on both trash and recycling routes and leave "friendly enforcement" reminders for residents on materials that were left behind.
- The Enforcement Officer's hours were increased to 30 hours after savings were realized and there was potential for more.
- The town files all "friendly reminders" and is planning on instituting fines against egregious violators and repeat offenders.

Results:

- By the end of fiscal year 2006, the town had reduced its disposal tonnage by 610 tons (5%) for a savings of \$43,869.51 in avoided disposal costs.
- The net benefit to the town after paying for the enforcement officer was \$30,797.51 – the officer had more than paid for himself.
- Starting in FY07, the enforcement officer's hours were increased to 30 hours a week and the town set a monthly tonnage target at 800 tons or less than \$60,000/month for trash disposal costs. The FY06 monthly average was 913 tons.
- To date, the town has reduced its tonnage 340 tons over the previous year – which were months that also saw enforcement actions, so this is over the already reduced tonnage amounts of the previous year.
- So far in FY07, the town has saved \$24,692.02 in avoided disposal costs and net benefit after payroll of \$16,532.02
- Interestingly enough, recycling tonnage was unchanged in FY06. To date in FY07, recycling has increased 4%. The town does not pay for its recycling, therefore the recycling benefit is in avoided disposal costs assumed in trash tonnage decrease.

Lessons Learned:

- A good inspector more than pays for themselves. The town's net savings over the last 16 months was more than \$47,000.
- Having a enforcement officer reinforces and supports the haulers to do the right thing
- Provides control and consistency
- Education is often one person/household at a time, so it may take some time to see results, as is the case with recycling.

